LOK SABHA

Thursday, December 12, 1996/Agrahayana 21, 1918 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at one minute past Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman and Nicobar Islands) : I have given a notice for Adjournment Motion.

MR. SPEAKER : We will see after Question Hour.

I will allow you after Question Hour.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Please try to understand that in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, all development works have been stopped. Thousands of workers are now jobless. We cannot even provide drinking water to the tribal people.

MR. SPEAKER : I understand.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : We cannot harness the water. This is a very serious situation prevailing in that part of the country...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (Mumbai North West) This matter may be taken into consideration ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : This is a very unusual situation.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Despite being a Union Territory, it is facing such problems ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Harnessing of drinking water to provide it to the tribal population cannot be done. Entire development work is stopped there. In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, collection of sand and stone quarrying has been banned by the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the CRZ Regulations. We cannot provide drinking water to the people ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : People of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are facing a lot of problems ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Let me say something.

I think, it is a serious problem. The Government should attend to that problem. The people are in difficulty. This matter was raised earlier also. Some solution has to be found out. In fact, I placed this matter before the Business Advisory Committee and the hon. Member met me also in the Chamber to point out that the problems relating to the Union Territories, having no legislature have not been discussed on the floor of the House. I am sure that the point is very valid. Since they do not have legislatures, their problems have to be discussed on the floor of the House. I agree with the demand of the hon. Member and we have already admitted a discussion under Rule 193 on the problems of Union Territories having no legislature. We will have a special debate on that.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Modernisation of ATCS

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*301. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL :
SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether in view of the recent mid air collision, the Government propose to make two separate air corridors for incoming propose to make two separate air corridors for incoming and outgoing flights;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government had launched a scheme for modernisation of air traffic control service at the airports in Delhi and Mumbai;

(d) if so, the details of the above scheme, the original estimated cost thereof, the target set for completion of the scheme, the present status of the work done under the above scheme and the time by which the scheme is likely to be completed;

(e) whether implementation of the above scheme has been delayed; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of cost escalation?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (f). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b). The proposal for separate corridors for unidirectional movement has been under examination for sometime. While planning modernisation of Air Traffic Control System at Delhi, separate corridors for incoming and outgoing traffic have been incorporated and appropriate navigational equipment are being installed.

(c) and (d). The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has embarked upon a project for the modernisation of Air Traffic Control Services at Delhi and Mumbai and the present estimated cost is Rs. 423.89 crores with a foreign exchange component of Rs. 266.48 crores. The original approved cost of the project was 209.76 crores with a foreign exchange component of Rs. 162.05 crores. The equipment for commissioning this system is already under installation and is being tested. This modernised system is likely to be operational at Delhi by March, 1997 and at Mumbai Airport by June, 1997.

(e) and (f). There has been some delay in the execution of this project. Procedural delays in the acquisition of land, unforeseen problems like leakage of water pipeline at Bombay Airport delaying the civil/ electrical works, change in the scope of the work due to upgradation of the system to incorporate uptodate traffic control facilities including satellite based future air navigation facilities, failure of a number of components during installation resulting in reimport/ replacement of damaged items, modifications in the Radar equipment etc. have contributed to the delay in the execution of this project. However, there is no likelihood of any further delay. The cost estimate have increased by 214.13 crores compared to the original estimate of Rs. 209.76 crores.

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Minister has already given the answer in order.

You will find from the answer that the project execution for the modernisation of Air Traffic Control services has already been delayed and the result of the delay has been a loss to the tune of Rs. 214.13 crore. It is the penalty to the country and the people of the country. This penalty is more than 100 per cent escalation or increase in the cost of the modernisation project. Moreover, there is also increase in the import component to the tune of Rs. 104.43 crore. The project commenced, most probably, in October, 1995 but till date nothing has been moving at speed. The hon. Minister has given the reasons thereof. They are very funny. He said: "Due to unforeseen problems, problems like leakage of water pipeline at Mumbai Airport and so on". Leakage of ordinary pipeline is not an unforeseen reason. In addition to this, he has given many more reasons viz., upgradation of the system. Because of that, on the very day, a month ago, a terrible collision took place which exposed the air safety measures in India.

So, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether any time-bound programme or assurance has been given to this House for bringing in new technology by upgrading this air safety system to the international standards by installing a traffic alert and collision avoiding system. Similarly there are also some more new censors in aeroplanes and Airports. These are the questions I wanted to ask the hon. Minister.

[Translation]

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM : Hon'ble Mr. Speaker, Sir, modernisation work for Delhi and Mumbai has been completed by March, 1997.

[English]

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Sir, I have come across a news item wherein solar energy has been used as a source of energy for the planes. It has already been tried in America, particularly, in NASA at California. This system has resulted in a 2-hour flight in the air at 50,000 feet altitude without a pilot. This will definitely avoid both noise as well as pollution. Therefore, I want to know whether the hon. Minister is aware of this system, and if so, whether he proposes to take any step in this regard.

[Translation]

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM : Sir, first of all let us learn to use the energy available then will see it later on.

[English]

As far as this is concerned, it has not come to our knowledge. We do not have any knowledge about this. That questions does not arise.

[Translation]

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this action of Hon'ble Minister Shri Ibrahim Sahib is landable that immediately after assuming the office he has taken care of Air safety measures and has issued a statement in this regard. You have inherited the delay caused. In your reply you say that there has been some delay. In fact, there has been much delay. Is it not a fact that modernisation plan had been prepared in 1988 it self? We must be informed as to when the plan was prepared. Is it not a fact that its implementation work has been assigned to a British Firm during 1990 and later that firm has been dropped out and it has been assigned to an American firm. That American firm had also given assurance to complete the work by October 1995. But it could not fulfil its assurance. Why it is so? Who is responsible for it? A lot of discussion has taken place on this important issue. Whether any enquiry has been conducted? Who has been held responsible because the cost has became double. It is not proper to wind up the issue just by saying 'some delay'. I would like to know the details about the reasons for delay, the period for such delay and the action being taken in this regard. Alongwith it, the length of a runway should be at least 4 kms as per international standard. In Japan the length of the runway is 5 Kms. but in our country the norm of 4 Kms is not being followed. In this regard I would like to know as to what is being done in the name of modernisation?

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM : As far as the delay is concerned, there is a way to express it 'some delay'; if

you elanguate the word 'delay' it will be a long delay and if you say it is short it will be shortened. The scheme was to be completed in October 1995 but when it has not been completed I have appointed the Director General of Civil Aviation fifteen days back to ascertain the reasons for the delay, whether the fault is ours or of Rathan Company. If the fault is of the company how will they compensate the loss suffered by us and what action should be taken against them. I have appointed the Director General of Civil Aviation just fifteen days back and as soon as his report is received I will inform you.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This has been discussed in the House earlier. Let us go to Question No. 302.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We had a full debate on this under Rule 193.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Sir, the word 'Bombay' has been used. Very often it should be corrected as 'Mumbai'.

MR. SPEAKER : All right. That will be corrected.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, we had a discussion under Rule 193. Q.No. 302, Shri Harin Pathak.

National Technology Mission

*302. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether National Technology Mission launched in 1986 has achieved its goals;

(b) if so, the number of digital trunk and automatic exchanges modernised, the number of public telephones in urban areas with STD/ISD facilities installed and the number of Directory Enquiry and Fault Repair Service in major cities computerised; and

(c) the mechanism of providing STD/ISD Public Telephones in urban as well as rural areas?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details are furnished as under :

(i) No. of digital/SPC trunk automatic exchanges: 323 (as on date)

(ii) No. of automatic exchanges modernised: 8424 (from 1.4.1992 to 31.3.1996)

(iii) Public Telephones with STD/ISD facility: 1,40,195 (as on (31.10.1996)

(iv) Directory Enquiry Service in Major cities that have been computerised : 75 (as on 31.10.1996)

(v) Fault Repair Service that have been computerised : 65 (as on 31.10.1996)

(c) The STD/ISD PCOs are allotted to educated (at least Matric/High School Pass in urban areas and 8th Pass in rural areas) and unemployed persons. STD/ISD PCOs to eligible applicants are allotted by STD PCO allotment committees constituted one for each Secondary Switching Area.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the House may be agree with me that no subscriber is happy and satisfied with telecom services in the country. Whatever be the claims of Hon'ble Minister or Telecom Ministry, today the position in the country is that no subscriber is satisfied with the telecom services. Your Ministry launches new schemes, new drives from time to time. Recently a 'Mission Better Communication' drive has been launched by the ministry. However a lot of things can be said about the scheme as well as the difficulties being faced by the subscribers. But I would like to ask the Hon'ble Minister through you as to how many old electro-mechanical exchanges are functioning in the country and the number out of them which have been converted into modern digital electronics exchange under your 'mission better communication' and modernisation scheme along with the number of exchanges yet to be converted into electronic exchange. This is my first supplementary question which I would like to ask.

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARAMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question asked by Pathak ji was related with the establishment of a Technology mission in 1986 which had fix Parameteres and it was also included in but it that the manual based exchange would also be converted into automatic one. As per my information, at present in all district headquarters electronic exchanges have been converted into automatic exchanges and the progress is going on rapidly. We are also trying our best to convert the manual exchanges as early as possible. We have chalked out a scheme for this year and as per this scheme in some backward areas particularly of Eastern Uttar Pradesh which is quite a vast area, electronic exchanges would be set up by the end of the year.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to have your support and would like to draw your attention towards the question I have asked. It seems to me that Hon'ble Minister is not replying properly. What I have asked is this

[English]

whether National Technology Mission launched in 1986 has achieved its goals?"